

**ASEAN Regional Forum Statement on
Strengthening Cooperation in the Management of
Cross-Border Movement of Criminals**

In recent years, illicit drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, and terrorism have become increasingly serious and have severely harmed Asia-Pacific countries. Many of these crimes are closely linked to the cross-border movement of criminals. Given this, ARF Participants seek to strengthen cooperation in the management of cross-border movement of criminals.

Recalling the ASEAN Regional Forum Statement on Cooperative Counter-Terrorist Action on Border Security issued at the 10th ASEAN Regional Forum in 2003.

Condemning all forms and manifestations of violence and transnational organized crime, no matter where, when, who, and which organizations carry out such activities that have impaired peace, order, security and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and the world at large;

Noting with concern the serious threats posed by the cross-border movement of criminals and of the negative economic and social implications related to organized criminal activities;

Desiring to improve law enforcement cooperation and cooperation on border management in combating illicit drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, and terrorism in accordance with the respective ARF countries' domestic laws and regulations and bringing criminal offenders to justice;

Further desiring to make full use of existing frameworks for law enforcement cooperation including information sharing on the management of cross-border movement of criminals;

Recognizing that terrorist activity has undergone complex and profound changes in recent years, where the patterns of terrorist attacks have become internationalized, and cross-border movement of terrorists has become increasingly frequent, posing serious challenges to the respective domestic security of countries in the Asia-Pacific and to regional and international peace and stability, creating a greater need for all Participants to cooperate more closely in light of their common interests. In this context, the common interests and space for cooperation in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism which can be conducive to terrorism , among all parties have expanded greatly;

Noting that regional cooperation is necessary to strengthen border management and the prevention, detection and prosecution of cross-border crime to benefit all ARF Participants and other countries in the region, while recognizing that its effectiveness needs to be improved;

Recalling the relevant principles of international laws including the United Nations Charter, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, and the three UN Conventions, where applicable, related to drugs as well as relevant binding UN Security Council resolutions;

Committing ourselves to holistic and comprehensive approaches to countering violent crimes, corruption, and terrorism in all their forms and manifestations, and to ensuring that those responses are implemented in a coordinated and coherent manner, along with broader programs or measures for social and economic development, poverty eradication, respect for cultural diversity, social peace and social inclusion;

Reaffirming our commitment and strong political will in support for effective, fair, humane and accountable criminal justice systems and the institutions comprising them, and encouraging the effective participation and inclusion of all sectors of society, while respecting fully the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and recognizing the responsibility of Participants to uphold human dignity, all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, in particular for those affected by crime and those who may be in contact with the criminal justice system, including vulnerable members of society, regardless of their status, who may be subject to multiple and aggravated forms of discrimination, and to prevent and counter crime motivated by intolerance or discrimination of any kind.

Calling on all ARF Participants to endeavor to strengthen regional cooperation in accordance with their respective domestic laws and regulations in the following areas:

1. Preventing and combating illicit drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, and terrorism in all its forms and manifestation, in an effective and efficient manner to alleviate pressure on and promote effective border management of countries throughout the region, including through enhanced cooperation.
2. Enhancing, with the aim to promote, greater operational cooperation in border interdiction, border management, and information exchange to prevent illicit drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, and terrorism, including the suppressing of terrorist financing.

3. Making full use of the existing mechanisms to facilitate information sharing and operational cooperation on preventing and combating transnational crime and terrorism among law-enforcement and relevant border control agencies, where relevant, and explore the possibility of establishing more platforms to enlarge such cooperation as appropriate.
4. Encouraging all ARF Participants to explore ways to strengthen information sharing, including information on terrorist organizations, and cooperation and technical exchanges on countering terrorism, illicit drug trafficking, trafficking in persons and on effective border management at national and regional levels, among immigration and border control agencies .
5. Continuing to enhance international cooperation on extradition and mutual legal assistance (MLA), including confiscation of proceeds of crime and the transfer of sentenced persons among other areas in accordance with domestic laws and regulations.
6. Enhancing cooperation and exchange information on trends and techniques used in the illicit trafficking of drugs at border areas through land, sea or air, as well as on the identity and movements of suspected persons, and the movement of properties, equipment and other instrumentalities involved in the commission of illicit drug trafficking, as well as best practices on border management among law enforcement and relevant border control agencies in the region.
7. Strengthening the study of, communication on, and exchange and sharing of best practices on countering terrorism, and combating transnational organized crime, and where appropriate, explore the possibility of conducting joint research in these areas of study and enhance cooperation in personnel training and organizing mutual visits to improve capacity building and capabilities of ARF Participants.
8. Undertaking efforts to strengthen coordination and information sharing between ARF ISM on CTTC with relevant ASEAN Sectoral Bodies and ASEAN-led mechanisms related to strengthening management of cross-border movements of criminals involved in transnational organized crime and terrorism, such as the ASEAN Senior Officials' Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) and ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (DGICM).
9. Developing strategies, at national and regional levels as appropriate, to disrupt the movement of criminals and enhance border management capabilities.
